

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 ACDA-05 SAM-01 SY-05 USSS-00

OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00 /093 W
----- 108458

P R 180735Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3449

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0613

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREA - MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

1. ACCORDING ALLEGED EYEWITNESS, A SIZABLE ENGAGEMENT TOOK PLACE YESTERDAY BEGINNING AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30 A.M. AND CONTINUING WELL INTO THE AFTERNOON AT APPROXIMATELY THE 13 KM MARK ON THE ROAD BETWEEN ASMARA AND DECAMERE. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT ABOUT 100 INSURGENTS, POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS ELF, ALTHOUGH THIS NORMALLY PLF TERRITORY, ATTACKED FOUR TRUCKLOADS OF GOVERNMENT TROOPS. THE INSURGENTS WERE DRESSED IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, WERE SPEAKING ARABIC, WERE USING PORTABLE RADIOS, AND WERE ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS IDENTIFIED AS KALASHNIKOV. THE ROAD WAS ALSO REPORTEDLY CUT AT THE 21 KM MARK.

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2. THE VILLAGES IN THE AREA WERE REPORTEDLY EVACUATED AND EIGHT CIVILIAN BUSES WERE STOPPED JUST BEFORE THE AMBUSH SITE. PASSENGERS, ALL ERITREAN, ALLEGEDLY DISEMBARKED AND CONTINUED ON BY FOOT TO DECAMERE.

3. INFORMANT CLAIMS HE ASKED AN INSURGENT ABOUT THE AMERICANS WHO WERE SIEZED ON MONDAY AND WAS TOLD TO MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS.

4. COMMENT: THIS ENGAGEMENT IS TYPICAL OF THOSE THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THIS AREA OVER THE YEARS, ALTHOUGH ON A SOMEWHAT LARGER SCALE THAN MOST. THE CLASSIC PATTERN INVOLVES A ROAD AMBUSH, A SHARP ENGAGEMENT FOLLOWED BY THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE INSURGENT FORCES, AND AN EXTENSIVE SWEEP POSSIBLE ACCOMPANIED BY ARTILLERY AND AIRCRAFT, BY THE GOVERNMENT FORCES. MORE OF THIS CAN BE EXPECTED AS LONG AS THE INSURGENCY REMAINS ACTIVE.
SHERRY

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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